LATINO/A RACIAL SELF IDENTIFICATION: TAKING A CLOSER LOOK WITH INTEGRATION MEASURES

A Thesis

by

MARISA ESTELA SANCHEZ

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

August 2011

Major Subject: Sociology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Rogelio Saenz
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ABSTRACT

Latino/a Racial Self Identification: Taking a Closer Look with Integration Measures.

(August 2011)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Rogelio Saenz

This study uses logistic regression to analyze how strength of American identity influences Latino/a racial self identification with traditional and integration measures such as discrimination and skin color. These integration measures are not considered in Latino/a racial identity research using Census data that focuses on traditional measures such as socioeconomic status and education. The primary hypothesis of the analysis is that those Latino/as who report seeing themselves strongly as American are more likely to choose "white" than "some other race" as their racial identity. The secondary hypothesis states that those Latino/as with darker skin tones and higher reports of discrimination will also be more likely to choose "some other race" than those Latino/as with lighter skin tones and no reports of discrimination. This is due to the concept that in America historically, only those considered white were allowed to be citizens of the United States and therefore American. Additionally, the concept of being American is still closely linked as someone with European decent and European features holding white values regardless of citizenship statues.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The current debate of Latinos racial identification can be traced all the way back to 1848 when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed as an end to the Mexican-American War. The former land of Mexico was not devoid of people, but inhabited by Mexicans who were seemingly promised in this treaty that they would be granted citizenship in Article VIII, and U.S. rights in Article IX (Menchaca 2001). However, these promises were actually never intended as the white politicians of American saw the Mexican population participating in the U.S. democratic process a threat, and therefore modified and ratified the treaty to limit the political participation of Mexicans in politics (Perea 2003). Thus, many Mexicans were denied these promises of citizenship and equal rights as race became an important characteristic in determining the admission into the U.S. (Perea 2003). This event in 1848 outlined the way in which Mexicans and several other Latino/as in later centuries would be viewed and treated by white Americas, as race is still primary factor as it was then in identifying those individuals "worthy" of American citizenship and rights. Additionally, it was this instance which historically started the long debate as to the racial identity of all Latino/as throughout the centuries and to this day.

This thesis follows the style of *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency.*

This historical debate as the race of Latinos is documented best in the racial prerequisite court cases. In order to decide if an individual could become a U.S. citizen, court trials, which had been in use since the first trial in 1878, thus were used as racial prerequisite decisions up until 1952 (Lopez 2006). These types court cases were used in jurisdictions across the nations and took place in states courts in California, and even the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. (Lopez 2006). Applicants claiming a "white" racial identity from a variety of countries were trialed including individuals from Canada, Mexico, Japan, the Philippines, India and Syria (Lopez 2006). It was very rare that applicants' claims were ruled in favor by courts. Between 1878 and 1909 only one of twelve of these prerequisite cases ended in the favor of the applicant (Lopez 2006). An example of such cases is the 1897 federal court case in Texas, *In re Rodriguez*, which admitted Rodriguez with citizenship even thought he was a "pure-blooded Mexican" and if the scientific classification of the anthropologist had been followed strictly, Rodriguez would probably not have been classified as white (Lopez 2006).

Despite these very rare cases where applicants were ruled to be "white" as the case above, it is still very important to remember that even though by law Latino/as were classified as "white" the social world that surrounds them has always identified them otherwise, rendering the legal classification almost meaningless as they face discrimination and racism in several of the U.S. structural institutions. It is partly because of these reasons that Latino/as to this day have a variety of ways to identify themselves racially as the law and social practices of racial classification in the U.S.'s Black and white paradigm makes it difficult.

Additionally, making matters of racial identity (self identified or otherwise) difficult for Latino/as is that they are a special population of people as they are not homogenous but come from a variety of countries within varies different generations with different histories, languages, customs, and racial classification systems of their own. Typically, the concept of race in Mexico, South America, Central America, and the Caribbean is determined using a variety of characteristics including physical phenotype as well as economic status. Because of this, when Latino immigrants enter the U.S. they find a different racial categorization system that is imposed on them as they face the possibility of suddenly being racially identified by a race they would have never considered themselves in their previous country.

The contemporary debate over Latino/a racial self identification surrounds the fact that almost half of Latino/as report "some other race" as their racial identity starting in the 1980 census. The second most popular racial identification for Latino/as is "white". Since the 1980's research using census data and non-government surveys have found differences that account for Latino/as identifying with one identity versus another across socioeconomic statuses, generational statuses, and ethnic groups. However, more research that acknowledging that Latino/as are not a homogeneous group needs to be done to better investigate the difference and reasons why almost half Latino/as continue to racially identify as "some other race" despite the several changes in the race and ethnicity items used in the census and replicated in non-government surveys.

It is becoming of increasing importance to better account for Latino/as racially in the U.S. not only due to their increasing numbers, but also due to the difficulty

historically and presently to account for this group racially for public policy. Studies that have analyzed Latino/a preference for racially identifying as "some other race" have come to the conclusion that the primary reason why Latino/as continue to identify in such way is due to the inadequacy in the measuring instrument for race and ethnicity (Hitlin 2007). Despite the several changes in the wording and location of the race and ethnicity items in the census and non-government surveys, half of Latinos continue to racially identify as "other race". Therefore, more research that helps us better understand how Latino/as view themselves as a racial and ethnic group is needed in order to more seriously create and implement public policy related to the Latino/a population.

Previous studies that have analyzed Latino/a racial identification have used the traditional integration measures of socioeconomic status, educational status, and English speaking ability to predict their influences on racial identity. These traditional integration measures are collected by the census and often used to analyze census data. However, other surveys that have gathered information on non-traditional integration measures such as skin color and discrimination have allowed researchers to gain a better understanding of which Latino/as choose to racially identify in a particular way and why. Because traditional integration measures can only go so far into explaining the experiences of Latino/as in the U.S., these other non-traditional integration measures are useful as they help provide a more encompassing and critical understanding of Latino/a racial identification.

This study uses data from the National Latino Survey (NLS) to investigate how the non-traditional integration measures such as skin color and experiences of

discrimination affect the racial identification of Latino/as. Additionally, this study examines an overlooked non-traditional integration measure, the strength of American identity, which is also likely to racial identification among Latina/os. Thus, the analysis will add to the existing literature by using strength of American identity as a possible integration measure that helps provide a more critical analyses of Latino/a racial identification.

American identity is an important integration measure to consider because of the country's long racialized history in the U.S. It is arguable that historically, and even still presently, the concept of being "American" is strongly related, almost synonymous, with being racially identified as white (Feagin 2000; Golash-Boza 2006) . Historically, an American identity tied to citizenship was only applicable to those who were white (Anglo-Saxon) by law (Lopez 2006; Monsivais 2004). In fact, even several individuals who were granted citizenship, such as Mexicans after the Mexican American War, who were promised the same citizenship and rights as American citizens were often denied American citizenship depending on shade of skin tone and phenotypic and cultural practices identified as passing as white or not (Menchaca 2001).

Presently, in the U.S. there is still a great sense of fear and even animosity towards the increasing numbers of Latino/as regardless of whether they are native- or foreign-born. This study argues that the racializizatin of Latinos that "otherizes" Latino/as as a economic and cultural threat to America (Chavez 2008) affects an individuals' racial identification.

Therefore, this study highlights the importance of using and applying new non-traditional integration measures such as strength of American identity, skin color, and experiences of integration that aid in attaining a more encompassing and critical understanding of Latino/as' racialized experience in the U.S. to understand racial identity. By using these types of non-traditionally measures opposed to traditional integration measures, more research can be conducted like this study that will help us find a more appropriate way of identifying Laitno/as not only for public policy but for understanding their place racially and culturally in the U.S.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Race and Identity

In the U.S. race has been closely linked to biological ancestry, where "common sense" assumptions about physical characteristics determined the race on an individual or people (Rodriguez 2000). Physical characteristics used in determining whether an individual was white or not were skin tones, hair textures, and the shape and size of body parts. Thus, throughout U.S. history, various institutions have been concerned with defining race for different ends. When an official body such as the U.S. Census or government defines race, the definition can be referred to as "state-defined race" (Rodriguez 2000). When race is defined by the perceptions and experiences of laypersons, the definition is referred to as "popular race" (Rodriguez 2000). Many times state-defined race and popular race influence each other defining and redefining the definition of race, and who fits into which racial category (Rodriguez 2000). However, these categories and definitions of race are created and imposed by those who have the power to do so, which influences society as a whole (Rodriguez 2000).

In addition, race can be thought of as an "identity" embodying both how one sees himself/herself how others see him/her (Rodriguez 2000). The conceptualizations of race as an identity often conflicts as the definitions involved are both internal characteristics that an individual feels they do or do not posses, and external characteristics others perceived an individual as possessing or not possessing (Rodriguez

2000). Many times, racial identity and mixed with national identity as in the case with Latino/as (Telles and Ortiz 2008), which only complicates the study of racially identify further. However, just because the concept of race and racial identity are so complex and difficult to study, it does not mean that these are topics that are impossible to study. Race continues to affect individuals even if the various conceptualizations and definitions of race and identity do not agree with each other, and it is only through further research that perhaps a greater understanding can be reached.

The U.S., Race, and the Census

Identifying the racial composition of the U.S. population has always been a major concern for the U.S. Census Bureau. However, acquiring and measuring racial identity has always been a difficult and highly politicized task that has shaped and influenced the social and biological conceptualization of race. Historically, and arguably still today, the United States has viewed race as a fixed ascribed—biological and genetic--characteristic that does not change after birth (Rodriguez and Cordeo-Guzman 1992). Additionally, the U.S. views race in binary terms, concerned with identifying who is "white" and who is "black" (James 2008). These two conceptualizations of race have made it difficult for the United States to find a racial label for Latino/as throughout history.

For the past several decades, Latino/as are revolutionizing the way the United States conceptualizes race as Latino/as do not fit neatly into the black and white binary. As the population of Latino/as has grown since the 1970s, the American people and the U.S. government have had to reconceptualize race in search of a category for Latino/as

within a binary black-white paradigm. While there is recognition that the concept of race is socially constructed (James 2008), extending back to the 1960 census respondents have been asked to classify themselves into fixed set categories. This change reflected the conceptualization of race as being socially constructed (James 2008), and because these fixed set categories have been presented as being mutually exclusive, it gives each fixed category the appearance of being a "pure" race, which is a false impression as it does not reflect reality (Rodriguez 2000).

Starting in 1970, under the census classification system, Latino/as are seen as an ethnic group rather than as a race. In 1970, 1980, and 1990, Hispanic-origin self-identification questions were included (Goldschieder 2002) as well as in 2000 and 2010. Previous to that, Hispanic origin populations were identified indirectly using measures based on birthplace of individuals, their parents, mother tongue, and presence of a Spanish surname (Goldschieder 2002). However, by the 1980s the census asked respondents if they were, "Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent (Lopez 2005). As Idler points out, "According to the official definition of the federal standards, a Hispanic or Latino is a 'person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race'." (Idler 2007; 17). The Census Bureau in 1980 also for the first time asked respondents to racially self-identify rather than having census takers make the racial determinations (Lopez 2005).

However, in 1993, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget announced it would review the racial and ethnic categories used in the collection of governmental data, and several proposals were made to amend the current categories, which included

adding the multiracial category and the making of "Hispanic" into a race (Rodriguez 2000). The proposal to make "Hispanic" into a race persisted to become a primary proposition that the Office of Management and Budget examined in its extensive review between 1995 and 1997, but was dropped once it became evident that creating the category of "Hispanics" would result in not only fewer Latinos being counted, but also result in fewer whites beings counted as well (Rodriguez 2000). Thus with the combination of self reporting and the addition of the Hispanic ethnicity item, the startling result that continues to be problematic to this day was the large number of respondents identifying as "other race," which has continued to grow since 1910 (Lopez 2005).

Census History and the "Other Race" Option

Since the 1980 Census, the number of Latino/as choosing "other" as their race has grown. The selection of "other race" has resulted in much debate regarding Latino/a racial self-identification. This is particularly the case because for the past three decennial censuses Latino/as have largely divided themselves into two major racial categories--those who identify racially as "white" and those who identify as "some other race." Despite the fact that Latino/as are treated as an ethnic rather than as a racial group, in both the 1980 and 1990 censuses 40 percent of Latino/as rejected the fixed racial categories, such as "white" or "black," and racially identified themselves as "some other race" (Rodriguez and Cordeo-Guzman 1992). It has been suggested that Latino/as choose "some other race" to describe their race due to a perceived inadequacy of the measurement instrument (Hitlin 2007).

There are two explanations that have been proposed to account for why almost half of Latino/as continue to choose “some other race” as opposed to one of the fixed categories. The first explanation argues that Latino/as who choose “some other race” are of mixed race (are mestizo or mulatto) (Rodriguez 1992;(Denton and Massey 1989). The second explanation argues that the format and wording of the race and ethnicity items were easily misinterpreted and therefore need to be reworded and moved to a different location in the survey. Despite the changes in the wording and placement of the race item in the 1980 and 1900 censuses, the proportion of Latino/as who identified as “some other race” increased by 2.7 percent between 1980 and 1990 (Rodriguez 1992).

However, other research suggests that both of these explanations fall short in accounting for the preference of Latino/a for the “some other race” category. For example, in the 2000 census there were additional changes in the wording and location of race and ethnicity items to compel Latino/as to choose a race besides “some other race”. The change placed the racial identification question after the Hispanic/Latino ethnicity item, which is the opposite of the 1990 Census (Saenz 2004). Moreover, the 2000 census allowed individuals to choose more than one race. Despite these changes, 42.6 percent of Latino/as still answered “some other race”(Saenz 2004). A slightly higher share (47.8%) opted for the white racial category(Saenz 2004). Studies have demonstrated that in the U.S., socioeconomic status, educational level, and English speaking ability, have influences on Latino/a racial identification. Research, for example, shows that more educated persons are more likely to identify as “white” compared to those with less education who are more likely to opt for “some other race”

(Rodriguez 2000). Even though the racial self identification of Latinos is different depending on their ethnic group, the racial self identification of "other race" is still substantial in each ethnic group (Rodriguez 2000). In fact a study by Golash-Boza and Darity (2009) found that respondents who have an income over $50,000 are less likely to identify as Hispanic and more likely to identify as "white." The same results were reported for Latino/as who had some college education or college diploma (Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008). English-speaking ability additionally affects Latino racial choices where individuals who are bilingual and those who did not speak Spanish in Golash-Boza and Darity's work being more likely to self-identify as "some other race" than as "white".

The degree to which Latino/as prefer, "some other race" versus "white" varies noticeably by national origin and by generational status. For example, 85 percent of Cubans identified as "white" in the 2000 census, while only 7 percent chose "some other race," and an even smaller percentage selected "black." Likewise, 60 percent of South Americans chose "white" in 2000, and 30 percent opted for "some other race." Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and other Latino/as chose "white" by a slight margin over "some other race" (Saenz 2004). Dominicans and Central Americans preferred "some other race" in the 2000 census, even though Central Americans preferred "white" (Saenz 2004). In reference to generational status, U.S.-born Latino/as were more likely to prefer "white" compared to their foreign-born ethnic group counterparts who were more likely to choose "some other race" (Saenz 2004).

Race in Latin America

Explanations for why national origin and generational status greatly influence Latino racial identification is rooted in how race is defined differently across Latin American countries versus the U.S. Race in Latin America is more fluid and based on more overlapping characteristics such as social class and phenotype (Rodriguez 2000). Additionally, conceptualizations of race in Latin America have recognized "mixtures" (which may be considered as multiracial under the U.S. racial structure) by granting them their own terminology and place in the Latin American racial hierarchy (Rodriguez 2000). This is unlike the U.S. census racial classification system, which prior to the 2000 census did not recognize mixed-race individuals as this group was not generally seen as white (James 2008).

However, even though the concept of race is claimed to be more fluid in Latin America compared to the concept of race in the U.S., in Latin America there is still the denial and depreciating of both African and Indian characteristics (Rodriguez 2000). In fact, the Afro-Latinos and Indians face social exclusion as they suffer disproportionately from poverty as they face high unemployment due to labor market discrimination and lack access to social services such as health and education (Hooker 2005). These disparities can be seen in the class structure in relation to race. For instance, in Latin America the racial structure is a pyramidal class structure that favors ethnic lines that have certain local, regional, and nation state elite characterized as white within each class (Rodriguez 2000). Even those Latin American countries that claim to subscribe to the ideology of *mestizaje* by implementing policies in inclusion and homogenization, the

reality is that most of the policies are masks for racist exclusion (Wade 2005). In fact, these same countries often continue to maintain racial and class hierarchies that favor white European upper-class political interests and ignore racialisims and neutralize the pluralisim of indigenous and Afro-Latino groups (Rodriguez 2000).

Thus, when Latino/as immigrate to the U.S. they bring with them racial conceptualizations and their place in it from their place of origin, which influences how they come to understand their racial position in the U.S. Yet, people in the United States may view them by U.S. racial standards rather than those from which Latin American immigrants bring with them.

Limitations of Census Racial Measures

However, when it comes to focusing on educational attainment, income, English-speaking ability, and place of origin measures, there are several social experiences that also affect how Latino/as racially self-identify. Even though the census has continued to change the wording and placement of the race and ethnicity question it has continued to have difficulty in measuring how Latina/os identify themselves racially. The complexity of the issue has become so great that for the past generation, the U.S. Census Bureau has had to defend its ability to count the population accurately (Anderson and Fienberg 2000). The complaints have grown against the Census Bureau's problems in counting some racial groups more accurately than others, and therefore, hurting the appropriate legislative appointments and funding policies minorities and the poor in the inner city (Anderson and Fienberg 2000).

In charge of maintaining the standards for collecting and presenting data of race and ethnicity is the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). According to the OMB the census racial classifications were designed to provide data to monitor such areas as housing, education, and employment for populations who have historically experienced discrimination (Anderson and Fienberg 2000) . Additionally, according to the OMB, the current use of the five racial categories in the census is not meant to provide a thorough categorization of ethnic and racial origins (Anderson and Fienberg 2000). Rather, these five racial categories only represent the social-political constructs meant for the record keeping, collecting, and presenting of data for administrative and statistical purposes, and are not scientifically based (Anderson and Fienberg 2000; Nobles 2002).

Additionally, limited measures used in census data also makes analyses attempting to study race uncritical and restricted in their scope. For example, as stated above, Golash-Boza and Darity (2008) found that those Latinos with income over $50,000 are more likely to identify as white. However, once Golash-Boza and Darity controlled for skin color in a comparison model, they found that Latino/as with household incomes between $20,000 and $34,000 were more likely to identify as "other race" than "white" (Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008). The difference in these findings is important as it has already been demonstrated in other analyses that lighter-skinned Latino/as tend to have higher socioeconomic status levels perhaps due to the strong relationship between class and skin color (Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008; Rodriguez 2000).

Therefore, research using census data to analyze only socioeconomic and educational attainment to explain differences between Latino/as who chose "white" or "some other race" is not comprehensive enough. There needs to be research with a focus on social factors that are known to affect the experience of Latino/as in the United States. This research also needs to acknowledge that Latinos have a history and continuation of racial discrimination based on phenotypes such as skin color, and based on ethnicities that are other than European white. Hence, studies that additionally take into account skin tone, levels of discrimination, and sense of American identity can help provide a more encompassing understanding of the racial identification of Latino/as.

Past Research on Integration Measures of Skin Tone and Discrimination

Studies investigating skin tone and discrimination find that "Latinas' and Latinos' skin colour and experiences of discrimination affect whether people from Latin America and their decedents who live in the U.S. will choose to identify racially as Black, white, or Latina/o" (Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008; 899). Darker-skinned Latinos consistently identify as "black" or "some other race" rather than "white" (Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008). Additionally Latino/as who reported discrimination based on their racial or ethnic background, were also less likely to identify as "white" (Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008). Thus, there is empirical evidence linking skin tone and experiences of discrimination in the United States not only among blacks but other minority groups including Latino/as. The racialization of Latino/as is reflected in how these results as darker skin tones along with experiences of discrimination reveal to individuals that they are not accepted as "white" by the

mainstream U.S. population. In sum, research shows that darker skin, experiences of discrimination, lower incomes, and limited Spanish ability all increase the likelihood that Latino/as will identify as "black"(Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008).

American Identity as an Integration Measure

The racial identity literature has placed great emphasis on studying traditional identity measures such as, socioeconomic status and English speaking ability. However, the literature needs more focus on integration measures such as skin color and discrimination. Integration measures provide a more encompassing understanding of the racialized experiences of Latinos in the U.S. because they get to the root of certain characteristics that are known to shape the way Latino/as are being racialized. Therefore, finding different integration measures not before considered can lead to a better understanding of why various Latino choose to racially identify differently. An additional integration measure that this study will investigate is strength of American identity. This has not been adequately investigated in the literature in relation to racial identity for Latinos. Historically, and arguably to this day, American identity has been linked to a white racial identity both socially and by law (Lopez 2006; Monsivais 2004). From the very creation of the Constitution to the mid 20th century, race—as well as gender, for that matter--was considered a criterion for determining who could be a citizen of the United States, and therefore an American with equal rights (Lopez 2006). Thus for most of U.S. history ascriptive characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and culture played a major role in determining who was and was not an American citizen (Monsivais 2004).

Who Can be an American?

Criteria for determining who can be considered an American originated before the foundation of the U.S. and continued to influence conceptions to the present day. The concept of Americans as a "chosen" people permeated Puritan and then American thought as early as the seventeenth century (Monsivais 2004). This led to the belief of America as being founded by a chosen race, and therefore supported the idea that Americans were racially superior (Monsivais 2004). Such notions were used to justify early American's concepts of manifest destiny and slavery. Even once slavery was abolished, in 1857 the Supreme Court sanctioned in the Dred Scott decision the notion that 4.5 million blacks living in the U.S. still were not considered citizens of the U.S. (Allen 1969).

Later, "the perceptions that Hispanics were racially inferior buttressed and was in turn encouraged by Manifest Destiny, the Monroe Doctrine, and U.S. expansion into Latin America" (Lopez 2005; 43-3). By the Mexican-American war it was recognized that annexation of a non-European population, "were not considered, by many, qualified to be American specifically because they were not Angle-Saxon" (Monsivais 2004; 24). Even though in Articles 9 and 8 of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which assured Mexicans in the ceded territory that the U.S. extended citizenship to all those to remained complete with all the rights of a U.S. citizen, within a year the U.S. government broke its federal responsibility (Menchaca 2001). Congress gave legislatures of the new territories, and the states the right to determine the citizenship status of the Mexicans (Menchaca 2001).

Soon after, for Latinos/as, as well as other minorities, there are several court cases from 1878 to 1952 documenting how the U.S. courts attempted to define the differences between whites and non-whites with the purpose of proving minorities as not white and therefore not American citizens (Lopez 2006). "This manner of thinking, equating being American with being Anglo-Saxon, has continued into the second half of the 20th Century" (Monsivais 2004; 24).

The Latino Threat

The argument can still be made in more recent times that being white is still a key aspect of being considered an American. The argument is seen through in the intrinsic concept behind traditional assimilation theories that hold whites as the norm that Latino/as, as well as other minorities, are measured against to determine how well Latino/as are adopting to white values, attitudes and lifestyles. The argument can particularly be seen in studies concerned with Latino/a assimilation into the U.S. such as Huntington's, "The Hispanic Challenge" (Huntington 2004), which additionally uses white values as the norm that Latino/as need to meet in order to be included as Americans. Assimilation studies have the tendency to place blame on minorities for their perceived inability or lack of motivation to better their circumstances rather than critically acknowledge the obstacles that minorities face in achieving those goals. Or as Davila states it is when "'differences' become 'failure' that racialized grouping are forever pressed to redress" (Davila 2008; 5).

Further research done by Golash-Boza has found that Latino/a Americans that experience discrimination in the U.S. are more likely to self-identify with a pan-ethnic or

hyphenated American label (such as Mexican-American), rather than as American (Golash-Boza 2006). This is due to the concept that the unhyphenated "American" label can only be applied for white Americans (Golash-Boza 2006; Feagin 2000). Therefore, Golash-Boza attributes these results to the fact that, "experiences of discrimination teach some Latinos and Latinas that other citizens of the United States do not view them as 'unhyphenated Americans'" (Golash-Boza 2006; 27).

Furthermore, it is often suggested that if Latino/as do not assimilate, then they are not American, and are a threat to the U.S., as suggested in the Huntington article. With this in mind, studies of assimilation can additionally lead to persistent "othering" of Latino/as so that an "us" versus "them" discourse is created. This discourse is often picked up by the U.S. mainstream that is known for depicting Latino/as as a threat to the U.S. This threat according to Chavez has been coined as the *Latino Threat Narrative* that uses, "assumptions and taken-for-granted 'truths' inherent in this narrative, [to depict] Latinos [as] unwilling or incapable of integrating, or becoming part of the national community (Chavez 2008; 2). Additionally, the Latino Threat Narrative depicts Latino/as as, "part of an invading force from south of the border that is bent on reconquering, land that was formerly their… and destroying the American way of life" (Chavez 2008; 2). The Latino Threat Narrative is specifically notable in the discussions involving legal and illegal immigration matters. The narrative can be present in news media, debate on radio and TV talk shows, new paper editorials, and internet blogs (Chavez 2008) (Santa Ana 2002). Moreover, the narrative not only refers to immigrants, but the narrative also refers to all Latinos regardless of citizenship and/or generational

status. For those speaking out of the Latino Threat Narrative, they work from the assumption that all Latinos are threat to America, not just immigrants.

Otto Santa Ana has written the book, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse* (2002), that covers his analysis of the verbal representation of Latino/as in the Los Angeles Times newspaper over a period of ninety months, from 1992 to 1998. Santa Ana found that recurring metaphors for immigration and immigrants were of invasion, disease or a burden to the American nation, and 60 percent of the time as dangerous waters (Santa Ana 2002). According to Santa Ana, even though anti- immigration advocates in public discourse initially claimed that immigrants were an economic threat to the U.S. and California, assumptions built into the above metaphors do not center on commonsense understanding of the U.S. economy, but as a perceived cultural threat (Santa Ana 2002).

As the Latino Threat Narrative suggests, Latino/as, and particularly immigration and immigrants, are seen as a threat to white "culture" and dominance in the U.S. in several mediums and manifest themselves in everyday acts of discrimination that Latino/as of all phenotypes, classes, citizenship statuses, ethnicities, and generational status face. The narrative manifests itself in everyday life as Latino/as and other minorities are reminded that they are not white—but are "other" and therefore excluded from educational opportunities, housing, job opportunities, and much more. With this in mind it is arguable that being a Latino/a, particularly one that does not share white values and lifestyles, is not considered truly American. Accordingly, being racially white is assumed to be synonymous with American values and symbols. This is why looking at

strength of American identity as an influence on racial identity could provide new insight into Latino/a racial identification.

Cultural Citizenship

Being able to claim citizenship to the U.S. is not the only aspect important in considering oneself American. As mentioned before, there must be a sense of belonging. However, not all citizens of the U.S. have always been able to utilize the same rights granted to other citizens. Traditionally, Flores states, "theories of citizenship often link membership and rights, with one defining the other. Thus becoming a citizen entitles the new member of society to a certain set of rights" (Flores 2003; 87). However, "for many racial groups, such as racial minorities, women, gays, the disabled, and others, the struggle for full citizenship and full membership is U.S. society has involved demands that extend beyond those of traditional white males" (Flores 2003; 88).

Cultural citizenship can be defined as the, "process of claiming space and right" (Flores 2003; 89). Key to this concept is the struggle for a group to attain a distinct social space where members feel comfortable and free to express themselves by free thinking, creating, and acting (Flores 2003). Without this social space and its freedoms a group can feel marginalized and excluded, and therefore have no sense of "belonging" except on the terms of the dominate culture (Flores 2003). Today, primarily through new media and politics working out of the Latino Threat, it is clear how Latino/as would not feel a sense of "belonging" in the U.S. with emphasis on Latino/as being threats to the U.S. culturally regardless of citizenship status.

A study by Barlow, Taylor, and Lambert (Barlow, Taylor, and Lambert 2000) looked at three different ethnic groups and how their strength of their "feeling American" varied. In this study it was important to highlight the differences of having a national American identity and "feeling American". It is important to understand that "national categories are fundamentally important because they should include and extend rights equally to all those who are residents even though all residents may not share equally the feeling of being included" Barlow et al. 2000; 582). However, we find this is not the case of Latino/as citizens and other minority citizens in the U.S. who although should be given the same rights, still do not have access to the same opportunities for education, labor, and housing rights compared to white Americans. If Latino/as do not see themselves being granted access to equal opportunities in the U.S., then how can they see themselves as being part of or belonging to the U.S. and therefore "feel American". "The focus of feeling American derives from the idea that feeling comfortable within a multiethnic national category requires more than just identification with it; comfort is also a function of feeling included by the members of more prototypic groups" (Barlow et al. 2000; 583).

Barlow (2000) explains further that it is possible for an individual to claim an American national identity and still feel excluded and therefore not "feel American". If increased numbers of ethnic groups/communities continue to feel excluded from full economic and social participation, those groups will continue to recognize that even though they claim "American" by national identity, they do not "feel American" (Barlow, Taylor, and Lambert 2000). There are four tenants central to the "American

Dream" which are, "equal opportunity, promise of success, control over one's destiny, and personal virtue from achieving that success" (Barlow et al. 2000; 584). And because success is central to the "American" dream, if an individual or group does not feel they can achieve this end, they do not feel included as being American.

Summary and Hypotheses

In conclusion and in consideration of past research, this study examines two hypotheses regarding the influences of integration measures on Latino/a racial identity. The first hypothesis is that both integration measures of reports of discrimination and skin tone will greatly affect the racial identity of a Latino/a. It is predicted that those Latino/a who report a darker skin shade and higher reports of discrimination will have increased odds in identify as "some other race" than "white" compared to those Latino/as reporting having lighter skin tones and less reports of discrimination.

The second hypothesis is that those Latino/as who report having a weaker American identity will be more likely to racially identify as "some other race" than "white" compared to those Latino/as who report having a strong American identity. This secondary hypothesis supports the first hypothesis in that those Latino/as experiencing more discrimination due to their darker skin tones will feel excluded from "mainstream" America regardless of their citizenship status and be less likely to identify as white. The literature above has discussed that being white is still a core aspect for an individual to be considered American as opposed to being non-American or a threat to the American culture.

CHAPTER III

DATA AND METHODS

Data

The data used in this study were collected by the Latino National Survey (LNS) in 2005 and 2006. There are 8,634 respondents from the United States who all identified as having a Hispanic background. Interviews for this survey were computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI), and began on November 17, 2005, and continued through August 4, 2006. All interviewers were bilingual (English and Spanish). Respondents were offered the option at the beginning of the interview to choose a preferred language for the entirety of the interview.

The sample is stratified by geographic designation, and each state sample was a valid, stand-alone representation of that state's Latino population (Fraga et al. 2006; NLS Codebook 2006. State sample sizes varied but all national figures were weighted so that the numbers were accurately representative of the universe (Fraga et al. 2006; NLS Codebook 2006) (Fraga et al. 2006). The universe of the study was 87.5 percent of the U.S.'s Hispanic population (Fraga et al. 2006; NLS Codebook 2006). States were selected first based on their overall Hispanic population size, and Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, and North Carolina were added to capture the evolving population of Latinos in those states (Fraga et al. 2006; NLS Codebook 2006). The national margin of error was plus or minus 1.05 percent, and the smallest sample size for any unit was 400, yielding a

margin of error of less than plus or minus 5 percent for each state (Fraga et al. 2006; NLS Codebook 2006).

Plan of Analysis

As mentioned, this study will use two models of binomial logistic regression. The first model establishes the racialization of Latino/as. The first model uses racial self-identification as a dependent variable with the two categories being, "white" and "some other race". The primary independent variables in this model are skin tone and reported discrimination. Control variables include gender, age, highest educational attainment, English speaking ability, ancestry group and generational status. Thus, skin color and perception of discrimination reflect ways in which Latina/os are racialized and how this is associated with how Latino/as racially self-identify as shown in other studies (Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008; Golash-Boza 2006).

The second model analyzes how the strength of an American identity is influenced by race, discrimination, and skin tone. Therefore, strength of American identity is the dependent variable of the second model and the primary independent variables are racial self-identification, discrimination, and skin tone. The control variables for the second model are the same as those used in the first model. This second model seeks to assess the extent to which skin color, perceived discrimination, and racial identification are associated with an American identity. Below are the descriptions of my dependent, independent, and control variables used in this study.

Dependent Variable for First Model

The dependent variable—racial identification—for the first model is based on the two most popular racial responses--"white" and "some other race." Individuals who selected "some other race" are assigned a value of "1" and those who chose "white" are given a value of "0."

Dependent Variable for Second Model

Strength of American identity is measured with four categories in response to the survey question, "In general, how strongly or not do you see yourself as American?". Respondents could answer with one of the four responses, "very strongly", "somewhat strongly", "not very strongly" and "not at all". From these responses a single variable was created where those who felt "very strongly" or "somewhat strongly", were grouped into one category and assigned a value of "1." Those who responded "not very strongly" or "not at all" were given a value of "0."

Independent Variables for Both Models

Both models include two key independent variables--skin color and experiences of discrimination. The skin color variable originally was measured on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 represented a very dark skin tone, and 5 represented a very light skin tone. Background analysis proved that the categories of skin tone 1 and skin tone 2 had few respondents and were thus combined into a single category representing those with "dark skin tone". Three other dummy variables were created to represent the rest of the skin tone categories on the scale. Skin tone 2 represents those with "medium skin tone," Skin tone 3 represents those with "light skin tone," and skin tone 4 represents those with the

"lightest skin tone". The reference category was 4 (those with very light skin tone), and all dummy variables are coded to 1.

Experience of discrimination is series of dummy variables created from four survey questions dealing with discrimination from being unfairly fired or denied a job promotion, unfairly treated by police, unfairly prevented from moving into a neighborhood, and treated unfairly at a restaurant or store. A response of "yes" for any of the four questions was scored as 1. Two responses of "yes" to any of the four questions was scored as 2, and so forth to the highest possible score of 4, which reflects a response of "yes" to all four questions. For those who reported "no" or "don't know/NA" across all four questions, persons were assigned a score of 0. This last group with the score of 0 is the reference category, and all variables are coded as 1. Note that for the second model, racial identification (the dependent variable in the first model) is included as an independent variable.

National Origin and Generational Status Variables for Both Models

National origin represents people's country of origin or background to which they trace their Latino/a heritage. Respondents were asked to identify their Latino/a heritage based on the country from which most of their family came from. Both foreign and U.S. born respondents were asked the same question. Six dummy variables are constructed to represent heritage. The first dummy variable represents those 335 individuals with heritage from the Dominican Republic. The second dummy variables represent the 822 respondents with heritage from Puerto Rico. The third dummy variable represents the 420 respondents with heritage from Cuba. The fourth dummy variables

groups individuals from in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama, which represents the 740 respondents from Central America. The fifth dummy variables groups the 422 individuals from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela, representing those from South America. The sixth dummy variable is those 35 who identified their ancestry from the United States. And finally, the reference category is the 5,704 respondents with heritage from Mexico. All dummy variables for the non-Mexican groups are coded as 1 in the respective dummy variable.

Generational status is composed of three dummy variables, first generation, second generation, and third generation. The first generation includes the 5,025 individuals who reported being born in some other country besides the U.S. including Puerto Rico. The second generation is comprised of the 1,695 persons who reported being U.S. born, but had neither parents born in the U.S., or had one parent born in the U.S. And finally, the third generation includes the 942 individuals born in the U.S. and had both parents born in the U.S. The reference category first generation and all variables are coded to one.

Below is a table that breaks down the coding for the dependent, independent, and control variables used in both models as described above for quick reference. Each variable is accompanied by a brief description and the followed by the coding.

Control Variables for Both Models

Additionally, both models include four control variables. Age is a continuous variable ranging from 18 to 97. Gender is another control where females are coded as

"1" and males as "0." The highest level of education is a series of five dummy variables. One group includes those who had never attended school and those who reached at least eighth grade level. The second group consists of those who had finished some high school, while the third group includes those who with a high school degree or GED. The fourth group is comprised of all those persons with some college, and the final group represents those with a college or professional degree. The final group of college educated respondents is the reference category, and all others are coded as 1 on their respective educational dummy variable. Language is a series of four dummy variables where those who "speak English not at all" are coded 1 as are those who, "speak English just a little", "speak English pretty well", and "speak English very well". The reference category is those who "speak English very well".

Description of Statistical Methods

The analysis is carried out through the use of two binomial logistic regression models, otherwise known as logit analysis. Binomial logistic regression functions by predicting from a group of independent variables the log odds that individuals will be in one of two categories of a dichotomous dependent variable. This form of regression was chosen because the dependent variables for both the models are nominal and dichotomous rather than continuous. The assumptions of multiple regression, including the errors of prediction, are normally distributed, often break down poorly, and yield misleading predicted values. These predicted values are misleading because they will often lie outside the logical range between 1 and 0 when using dichotomous dependent

variables (Treiman 2009). Therefore, logistic regression is appropriate for handling the dependent variables in this analysis.

In logistic regression the outcome value of Y can only be one of two forms. The first form is the value 1 which represents "yes" and the second form is the value of 0 which represents "no". Logistic regression allows us to estimate the probability of being in either category, and examines how the independent variables will influence the categories. Below is the formula for logistic regression.

$$\ln\left(\frac{F_1}{\overline{X}_{1\ldots k}}\right) = a + \sum_{k=1}^{k} b_k X_k$$

K represents the independent variables, X_K, and a and b_K are coefficients found also in OLS regression (Treiman 2009). "The dependent variables is the natural log of the expected odds of being in category 1 of the dependent variable rather than in category 2" (Treiman 2009).

Logistic regression produces logit coefficients that are not easily understood and therefore converted into odds ratios by taking the antilog (e to the power) of the logit coefficient. The odds ratio contains the same information as the logistic regression coefficient, and therefore the only change is the way the information is presented.

Below is a Table 1, which summarizes the dependant and independent variables used in this analysis.

Table 1. Description and Measurement of Variables Used to Determine Racial Identification Based on Reported Discrimination and Skin Color for Latino/as in the LNS for 2006

Dependant Variables	
Racial Identity (Model 1)	1 = Some Other Race; 0 = White
Strength of American Identity (Model 2)	1 = Strong; 0 = Weak
Independent Variables	
Discrimination Score (Model 1 & 2)	Derived from four separate LNS questions related to work, housing, police, and service discrimination. Counted as a score from 0 to 4.
Discrimination 0	1 = answered "no" to all four questions or NA; 0 = otherwise
Discrimination 1	1 =answered "yes" to at least one of four questions; 0 = otherwise
Discrimination 2	1 = answered "yes" to at least two of four questions; 0 = otherwise
Discrimination 3	1 = answered "yes" to at least three of four questions; 0 = otherwise
Discrimination 4	1 = answered "yes" to all four questions; 0 = otherwise
Skin Tone (Model 1 &2)	A scale of skin tones ranging from 1 very dark to 5 very light.
Skin tone 1 (Dark)	1= skin tone 1; 0 = otherwise
Skin tone 2 (Medium)	1= skin tone 2; 0 = otherwise
Skin tone 3 (Light)	1= skin tone 3; 0 = otherwise
Skin tone 4 (Very light)	1= skin tone 4; 0 = otherwise
Racial Identification (Model 2)	1 = Some Other Race; 0 = White
Control Variables	
Ethnic Group	Derived from combining the ethnic ancestry group of those Latino/as born in the U.S., and the country of origin from those born outside the U.S.
Puerto Rico	1 = Born or Ancestry from Puerto Rico; 0 = otherwise
Cuba	1 = Born or Ancestry from Cuba; 0 = otherwise
Dominican Republic	1= Born or Ancestry from Dominican Republic; 0 = otherwise
Mexico	1 = Born or Ancestry from Mexico; 0 = otherwise
South America	1 = Born or Ancestry from South America; 0 = otherwise
Central America	1= Born or Ancestry from Central America; 0 = otherwise
U.S.	1 = Those who specifically reported Ancestry from U.S.; 0 = otherwise

Table 1. Continued

Control Variables Continued	Derived from variables measuring who is foreign born versus U.S. born (Puerto Rico included) and looking parents' place of birth.
Generational Status	
Generation 1	1 = All those foreign born outside the U.S.; 0 = otherwise
Generation 2	1 = Those born in U.S. but had one or neither parents born in U.S.; 0 = other
Generation 3	1 = Those born in U.S. and both parents born in the U.S.; 0 = otherwise
English Speaking Ability	Derived from the ability reported to speak and understand English
Not at All	1= Not at all; 0 = otherwise
Just a Little	1 = Just a little; 0 = otherwise
Pretty Well	1= pretty well; 0 = otherwise
Very Well	1 = very well; 0 = otherwise
Education	Derived from the highest educational attainment of respondent.
Minimal Education	1= 0-8the grade education; 0 = otherwise
Some High School	1 = some high school, but didn't finish; 0 = otherwise
High School Graduate or GED	1 = high school or GED graduate; 0 = otherwise
Some College	1= some college, but didn't finish; 0 = otherwise
College Professional	1 = college degree or higher; 0 = otherwise
Age	A range from 18 to 97
Gender	1= female; 0 = male

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Before discussing the regression results, descriptive statistics using cross tabulations of the primary variables of interest will be discussed below. These descriptive results are important as they provide an overall distribution of responses for the 2006 LNS sample used in this analysis. The following tables present the cross tabulations of particular variables of interest, which are those that examine the distribution of discrimination reports, skin color, ethnic group, and generational status by racial identification and strength of American identity. Table 2 presents the total percentages for each of the variables in this analysis. The total number of respondents in the sample for this analysis is 7,683. The only variables not present in Table 2 is age, which is a continuous variable with a minimum age of 18 and the maximum age of 97, with the mean age of about 40.6.

In Table 3 we see in the first group of cross tabulations that among those Latino/as who reported a strong American identity, 72.2 percent racially identified as "other race", and 27.8 percent racially identified as "white". Among those who reported a weak American identity, 75.8 percent racially identified as "other race", and 24.2 racially identified as "white".

Table 2. Total Percentages for Dependent and Independent Variables for NLS Data, 2006

Variables	Percentage	Variables	Percentage
Some other Race	74.3	Discrimination2	8.7
White	25.7	Discrimination3	3.5
0-8th grade	21.8	Discrimination4	1.3
Some high school	14.6	Skin 1 Dark	10.5
High school graduate & GED	27.7	Skin 2 Medium	39.4
Some college	19.4	Skin3 Light	21.7
College professional	16.6	Skin 4 Very light	24.1
Puerto Rican	9.7	English not at all	11.6
Cuban	4.9	English just a little	31.0
Dominican	3.6	English pretty well	1.0
Central American	8.6	English Very Well	47.3
South American	5.0	Generation 1	65.4
Mexican	66.0	Generation 2	22.1
U.S.	0.4	Generation 3	12.3
Discrimination 0	66.6	Strong American Identity	40.5
Discrimination1	17.6	Weak American Identity	59.5
		N	**7,683**

Source: Latino National Survey (LNS), 2006

Table 3. Percentage of Latino/as' Strength of American Identity, Discrimination Score, Skin Tone, and Generational Status by Racial Identification

	White (%)	Other Race (%)	Total
Strong American Identity	27.8	72.2	100.0
Weak American Identity	24.2	75.8	100.0
Discrimination 0	27.8	72.2	100.0
Discrimination 1	24.5	75.5	100.0
Discrimination 2	19.1	80.9	100.0
Discrimination 3	14.6	85.5	100.0
Discrimination 4	10.0	90.0	100.0
Skin tone 1 (dark)	22.7	77.4	100.0
Skin tone 2 (medium)	18.4	81.6	100.0
Skin tone 3 (light)	28.0	72.0	100.0
Skin tone 4 (very light)	36.7	63.3	100.0
Skin tone Refused	27.1	72.9	100.0
1st Generation	26.5	73.5	100.0
2nd Generation	23.4	76.6	100.0
3rd Generation	25.5	74.5	100.0

Source: National Latino Survey (NLS), 2006

The second set of cross tabulations in Table 3 analyzes the distribution of racial identity by discrimination score. Results suggest that there is the possibility of underreporting discrimination since two-thirds (66.7%) of Latino/as in the sample reported not experiencing discrimination in four of the scenarios as described in the survey. The second largest group (accounting for one-fifth of the sample) of those Latino/as in the sample reported experiencing discrimination in only one of the four scenarios described in the survey. There are several possible explanations for the undercount which will be discussed further below.

The racial identification of Latino/as by discrimination score yield interesting results as among each discrimination score, the majority of Latino/as racially identified as "other race". Among those who reported experiencing no discrimination in the four survey scenarios, 72.2 percent racially identified as "other race," and 27.8 identified as "white". Likewise, among those who experienced discrimination in one of the four survey scenarios, 75.5 percent racially identified as "other race," and 24.5percent identified as "white". Similarly, the majority (80.9 percent) of Latino/as who experienced discrimination in two of the four survey scenarios also racially identified as "other race". Only 19.1 percent of Latino/as who experienced discrimination in two of the four survey situation identified as "white". Once again, among those experiencing race in three out of four survey scenarios, 85.5 percent racially identified as "other race," and only 14.6 identified as "white". Finally, among those Latino/as who reported experiencing discrimination across all four survey scenarios, 90 percent racially identified as "other race," and only 10% identified as "white".

The third set of cross tabulations in Table 3 demonstrates the distribution of racial identification by skin tone. All skin tones (dark, medium, light, and very light) had the majority of individuals racially identify as “other race”. For example, among those Latino/as with dark skin tone, 77.4 percent racially identified with “other race”. Similarly, among medium skin tone, 81.6 of Latino/as racially identified with “other race”. Among light skin tone (72 percent) and among those with very light skin tone (63.4 percent) identified with “other race”.

The last set of cross tabulations in Table 3 is generational status by racial identification. Results show that among the first generation, 73.5 percent racially identified as “other race”. Likewise, among the second generation, 76.6 percent racially identified as “other race”. Similarly, among third generation, once again approximately three-fourths (74.5 percent) racially identified as “other race”.

The cross tabulations of NLS ancestry ethnic group with racial identification in Figure 1 show varied results when compared to the results of the 2000 Census. For example, Figure 2 shows how the 2000 Census reported 47.3 percent of Latino/as in the Mexican ethnic group racially identified as “white” compared to 45.4 percent who identified as “other race” (Saenz 2004). However, only 23 percent of Mexicans in the 2006 National Latino Survey racially identified as “white”. Similarly, almost half (47 percent) of Puerto Ricans in the 2000 Census racially identified as “white” (Saenz 2004), while only 26 percent of Puerto Ricans in the 2006 National Latino Survey racially identified as “white”. Likewise, 59.4 percent of South Americans identified as “white” in the 2000 Census (Saenz 2004), compared to only 37 percent in 2006 National Latino

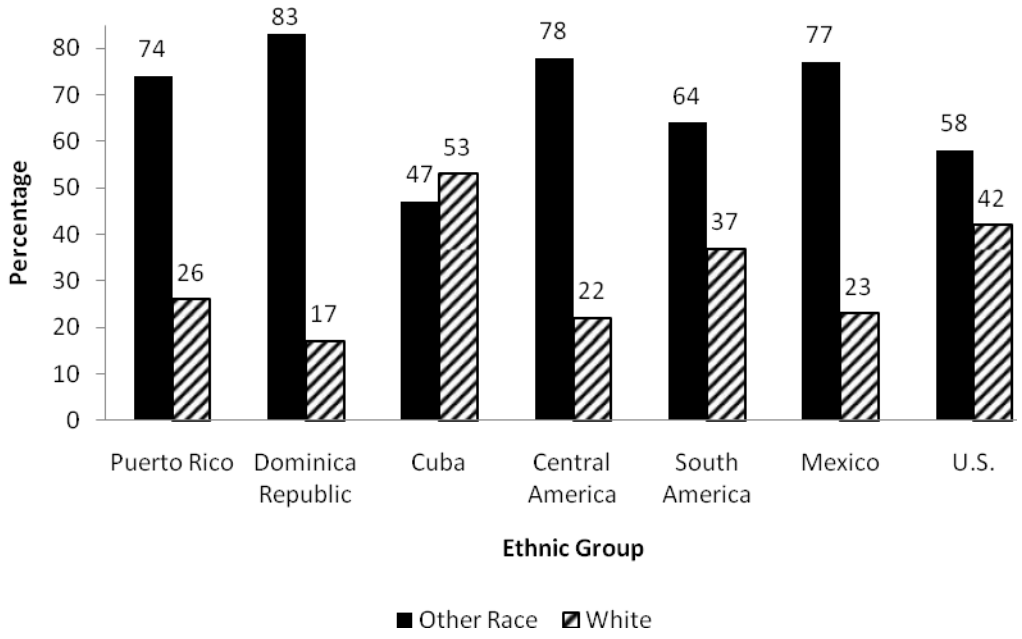

Figure 1. Percentage of Latinos Racially Identifying as White or Other Race by Ancestry Ethnic Group for NLS, 2006

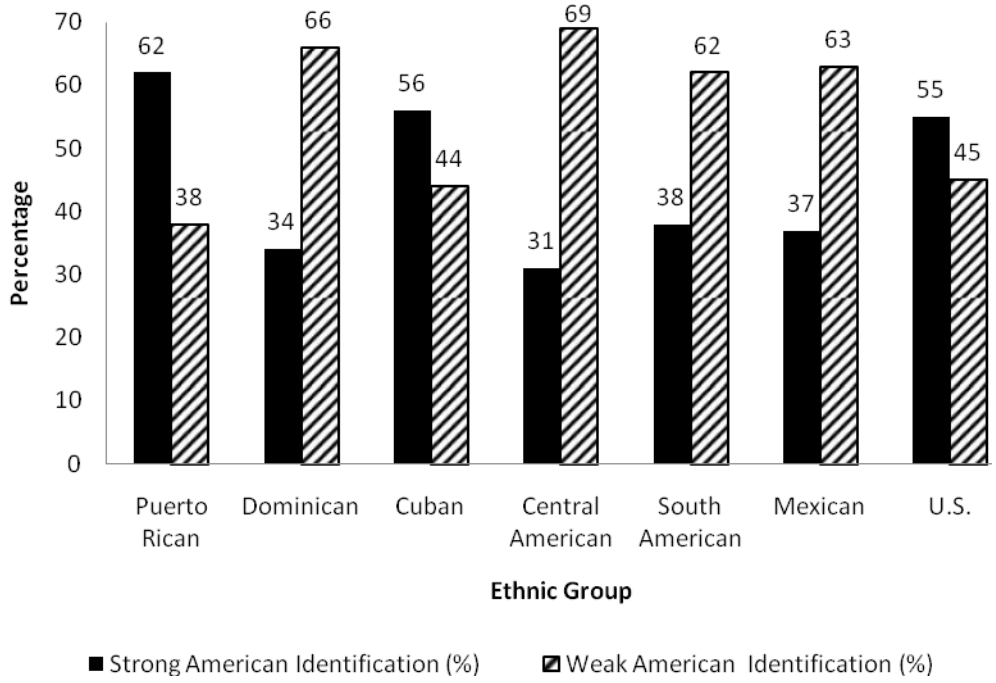

Figure 2. Percentage of Latinos Racially Identifying with a Weak or Strong American Identity by Ancestry Ethnic Group for LNS, 2006

Survey. The only ethnic groups in the 2006 NLS who shared similar results with the 2000 Census were the Cubans and Central Americans. In both surveys the majority of Cubans racially identified as "white" (Saenz 2004). However, in both surveys, the majority of Central Americans identified as "other race"(Saenz 2004).

Turning to Figure 2 we find that those Latino/a ancestry ethnic groups that expressed a strong American identity are the Puerto Ricans (62 percent), Cubans (56 percent), and those who identified themselves with a "U.S. ancestry" (55 percent). Of all the ethnic groups, those that showed the weakest American identification were Central Americans (69 percent), Dominicans (66 percent), Mexicans (63 percent), and South Americans (62 percent). These results allow us to make predictions on the relationship between racial identification and strength of American identity across ethnic groups. Because Puerto Ricans and Cubans most often racially identify themselves as "white," it is thus expected that both Puerto Ricans and Cubans would also claim a strong American identity when compared to other ethnic groups who identify as "other race". Thus, revealing a possible relationship between racially identifying as "white" and having a strong American identity.

Table 4 presents discrimination, skin tone, and generational status by strength of American identity. The first cross tabulation between discrimination score and American identity show that the majority of Latino/as who experienced no discrimination (62.4 percent) identified with a weak American identity. The results were similar for those with discrimination scores of one and two. However, the majority of Latino/as with a discrimination score of three (58.2 percent) and four (53 percent) reported a strong

Table 4. Percentage of Latino/as' Strength of Discrimination Score, Skin Tone, and Generational Status by Strength of American Identity

	Strong American ID (%)	Weak American ID (%)	Total
Discrimination 0	37.6	62.4	100.0
Discrimination 1	42.8	57.3	100.0
Discrimination 2	49.1	50.9	100.0
Discrimination 3	58.2	41.8	100.0
Discrimination 4	53.0	47.0	100.0
Skin tone 1 (dark)	42.8	57.2	100.0
Skin tone 2 (medium)	36.4	63.6	100.0
Skin tone 3 (light)	40.9	59.6	100.0
Skin tone 4 (very light)	47.4	52.6	100.0
Skin tone Refused	34.7	65.3	100.0
1st Generation	25.4	74.6	100.0
2nd Generation	62.9	37.1	100.0
3rd Generation	80.7	19.5	100.0

Source: National Latino Survey (NLS), 2006

American identity. This is contrary to what was expected. It was hypothesized those experiencing higher scores of discrimination would have weaker American identities compared to those with less discrimination. The second sets of cross tabulations are those of skin color and American identity. These results show that among all skin shades the majority of Latino/as reported a weak American identity. And finally, the third set of cross tabulations is generational status by strength of American identity. Results show as expected that the majority of the second and third generations had strong American identities, and first generation Latino/as had weak American identities.

In summary, the bivariate findings that look at strength of American identity, discrimination scores, skin tone, and generational status do not seem to support the hypothesis that these variables influence racial identification for Latino/as. Across all variables, as show in Table 3, the majority of respondents racially identified as "other race" among each category. In regards to the second bivariate analysis looking at strength of American identity by discrimination score and skin tone the results once again do not seem to support the hypothesis that these variables influences strength of American identity in Latino/as. That is, the only variables that supports the hypothesis was generational status we see in Table 4 were the majority of first generation Latino/as have weak American identities, and later generations have strong identities as expected. Across all the other variables, regardless of categories, the majority of Latino/as reported a weak American identity. This is why further analysis must be done with regression to test the hypotheses. Because previous research studies have found relationships between

skin tone, discrimination scores, and racial identity, there is evidence that these relationships should exist and probably not accessible through bivariate analysis alone.

Regression Results for Model 1

As mentioned before, the first model focuses on the dichotomous dependent variable of racial self-identification where "other race" equals 1 and "white" equals 0. Odds ratio results from the first model in Table 5 demonstrate that the two independent variables--skin tone and discrimination--are significantly associated with identifying as "other race."

First, the results show that Latino/as who report higher levels of discrimination have increased odds of identifying as "other race" compared to those Latino/as who report no discrimination. Specifically, the variable representing those who reported experiencing discrimination in only one of the four survey scenarios was the only variable that is not significant. However, as Table 5 shows, other things being equal, those who experienced discrimination in two of the four survey scenarios had the odds of choosing "other race" increase by 51 percent ($p < .001$), compared to those who reported experiencing no discrimination. Likewise, tor those who reported experiencing discrimination in three areas, other things being equal, the odds of identifying as "other race" increased by 98 percent ($p < .001$), and the odds are twice as likely for those who reported experiencing discrimination across all four areas within the survey's given situations (176 percent, $p < .01$) .

Table 5. Model 1 Logistic Regression Results for Latino/as Racially Identifying as Some Other Race

Independent Variables	b	e^b	Odds (%)
Discrimination 1	0.115	1.122	12
Discrimination 2	0.414***	1.513	51
Discrimination 3	0.683***	1.980	98
Discrimination 4	1.016**	2.762	176
Skin 1 (Very Dark)	0.460***	1.584	58
Skin 2 (Medium)	0.718***	2.050	105
Skin 3 (Light)	0.215**	1.240	24
Dominican	0.638***	1.893	89
Puerto Rico	0.050	1.051	5
Cuba	-0.820***	0.440	-56
Central America	0.156	1.169	17
South America	-0.425***	0.653	-35
U.S.	-0.656	0.518	-48
2nd Generation	0.007	1.008	0
3 rd Generation	-0.147	0.862	-14
English not at all	-0.391***	0.675	-32
English just little	-0.465***	0.628	-37
English pretty well	0.185	0.830	-17
Education 0-8	0.555***	1.742	74
Some high school	0.463***	1.590	60
High school and/ or GED	0.414***	1.514	51
Some College	0.302***	1.353	35
Female	-0.115*	0.890	-11
Age	-0.015***	0.984	-.01

Source: Latino National Survey (LNS), 2006
* p<.05, ** p< .01, *** p< .001

In addition, the hypothesis that darker skin tones would have higher odds in identifying as "other race" compared to those Latino/as with lightest skin tone is supported by regression results also in Table 5. As indicated above, Latino/as with dark skin tones also have increased odds of identifying as "other race" compared to those with a very light skin tone. In particular, the odds for those with the darkest skin tone of identifying as "other race" increase 58 percent ($p < .001$) compared to those Latino/as with the lightest skin tone (4). For Latino/as who reported the medium skin tone shade of 2, the odds double (105 percent, $p < .01$), all else being equal, compared to those Latino/as reporting the lightest skin tone (4). Finally the odds of racially identifying as "some other race" Latino/as with the second lightest skin tone 3 increase by 24 percent compared to the lightest skin tone.

The sub-hypothesis stating that later generations would have higher odds in racially identifying as "other race" was not supported by regression results shows in Table 5. Generational status was not significant in the first model. However, when examining the relationship between ancestry and racial identification, the regression results show that those of Dominican, Cuban, and South American ancestry were significantly different in their level of identification with "other race" compared to persons of Mexican ancestry. For Dominicans the odds of choosing "other race" increased by 89 percent ($p < .001$), all else being equal, compared to those of Mexican ancestry. However, the odds of choosing "other race" decreased by 56 ($p < .001$) percent for Cubans, and decreased by 35 percent ($p < .001$) for South Americans compared to those of Mexican ancestry. These findings are comparable to the descriptive results

reported earlier in which high percentages of Cubans and South Americans racially identify as "white" while high percentages of Dominicans racially identifying as "other race".

Regression Results for Model 2

The second model focuses on strength of American identity as the dichotomous dependent variable, where a strong American identity is equal to 1 and a weak American identity is equal to 0. The results for the second model support the primary hypothesis that Latino/as who racially identify with "other race" are less likely to have a strong American identity compared to Latino/as who racially identify as "white." Specifically, all else being equal, the odds of having a strong American identity decrease by 16 percent ($p<0.01$) for an individual who racially identifies as "other race" compared to Latina/os who racially identifies as "white" as shown in Table 6.

The hypothesis that discrimination would decrease the odds of an individual identifying with a strong American identity was not supported as the results are not significant[1] as shown in Table 6. However, the hypothesis that darker skin tones would have lower odds in identifying with a strong American identity was supported. The regression results show that the darkest skin tone is not significant. However, the odds of choosing a strong American identity decrease 18 percent ($p< .01$) for individuals with

[1] For experiences of discrimination a subgroup analysis was conducted which produced odds ratio results in the opposite direction expected until generational status was introduced into the model, which rendered discrimination insignificant. Complications with the discrimination variable are attributed to the possibility that measures for discrimination and/or strength of American identity do not fully capture their essence.

Table 6. Model 2 Logistic Regression Results for Latino/as Identifying as Strongly American

Independent Variables	b	e^b	Odds (%)
Discrimination 1	-0.063	0.938	-6
Discrimination 2	-0.023	0.976	-2
Discrimination 3	0.155	1.167	17
Discrimination 4	-0.267	0.765	-23
Skin 1 (Very Dark)	-0.092	0.912	-8
Skin 2 (Medium)	-0.203**	0.816	-18
Skin 3 (Light)	-0.168*	0.845	-15
Some Other Race	-0.172**	0.841	-16
Dominican	0.165	1.180	18
Puerto Rico	-0.093	0.910	-9
Cuba	0.639***	1.895	90
Central America	0.306**	1.358	36
South America	0.192	1.212	21
U.S.	-0.658	0.517	-48
2nd Generation	1.056***	2.876	188
3 rd Generation	1.840***	6.302	530
English not at all	-1.367***	0.254	-75
English just little	-1.067***	0.344	-66
English pretty well	-0.861***	0.422	-58
Education 0-8	-0.569***	0.565	-43
Some high school	-0.436***	0.646	-35
High school and/ or GED	-0.297***	0.742	-26
Some College	-0.135	0.873	-13
Female	-0.405***	0.666	-33
Age	0.024***	1.024	2

Source: Latino National Survey (LNS), 2006
* p<.05, **p< .01, ***p< .001

the middle skin tone 2, and decrease by 15 percent (p<.05) for those with light skin tone 3 in comparison to those with a very light skin tone as shown in Table 6.

Additionally, unlike the first model, generational status was statistically significant for the second model shown in Table 6. Thus, the sub-hypothesis that those Latino/as in later generations would have higher odds in reporting a strong American

identity compared to first generation Latino/as, is supported. The results in Table 6 show that for those in the second generation the odds double for identifying with a strong American identity (188 percent, p<.001), all else being equal, compared to those in the first generation. Similarly, for third-generation Latina/os their odds of identifying with a strong American identity increase five times more (530percent, p<.001) compared to the first generation.

In the second model the ancestry ethnic groups, Cuban and Central America, were statistically significant as shown in Table 6. For Cubans the odds of identifying with a strong American identity increase by 90 percent, all else being equal, compared to those of Mexican ancestry. Likewise, for Central Americans the odds of identifying with a strong American identity increase by 36 percent, all else being equal. When compared to Mexicans, Cubans and Central Americans have historically had better more legal benefits that have allowed them immigration and even citizenship. For example, since the 1980's, with the start of the civil war, already weak economies, and environmental disasters in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, have provided Central Americans and Cubans with legal benefits to enter the U.S. legally (Migration Policy Institute 2011). Additionally, in 1997, President Clinton signed the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) that provides immigration benefits and relief from deportation to certain Nicaraguans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Cubans (Migration Policy Institute 2011).

Discussion and Summary

The results provide support for all but one of the hypotheses. Evidence from the regression results in Table 5, show that experiences of discrimination and skin tone affect the racial identification of Latino/as. Thus, greater experiences of discrimination increase the odds of an individual racially identifying as "other race". This is consistent with other research (Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008) suggesting that experiences of discrimination racialize Latino/as through the message that they are "other" (not white). These experiences are internalized and help shape the way individuals construct their racial identities taking into account both how they see themselves and how others see them (Rodriguez 2000).

The regression results also support the hypothesis that persons with darker skin tones are more likely to identify as "other race" compared to their counterparts with the lightest skin tone. Experiences of discrimination are tied with skin tone and other phenotypic features such as hair color and texture, eye color, and bone structure. Additionally, there is historical evidence that the United States for several hundred years has enforced legal and informal racist policies and attitudes that have favored individuals with European decent and phenotypic features collectively termed "white". Structures in the country still use skin tone and other phenotypic features to determine who is white ("us") and who is not ("them") in daily interactions.

Interestingly, descriptive results in Table 2 show that medium skin tone was most selected by those Latino/as in the study. Over all the majority of the sample choose the medium skin tone (39 percent, 3,028 individuals out of 7,683), reflecting the *mestizo*

racial features of the majority of Mexicans bringing together indigenous and Spanish influences. Additionally, Table 3 shows that the middle skin was the most selected skin tone by those who also racially identified as "other race". Hence, it may be the case that the skin tone most stereotypically associated with Latino/as is a "medium" skin tone that is conceptually understood as being between white and black (O'Brien 2008). This "middle/medium" skin tone stereotype could influence Latino/a individuals when identifying their skin shade as this racially "medium" skin tone concept is promoted in media often showing Latino/as as individuals who are not light enough to be considered white, and yet not dark enough to be considered black (Davila 2008, 2001). The assumptions for this is that the middle skin tone is most often stereotyped as the color of "Latino/as", and therefore most picked by those identifying as Hispanic (Hitlin 2007), or in this case as "Latino". Yet, given that respondents themselves pick their skin tone, it may be the case that there may be a greater preference toward lighter skin with the result that individuals with darker skin tones may be opting for the medium skin tone category.

In addition, the hypothesis that racial identification affects strength of American identity is supported. The regression results indicate that Latino/as who racially identify as "other race" are less likely to identify with a strong American identity compared to their counterparts who racially identify as "white." As noted earlier, this finding reflects the conceptualization of "American" as being tantamount with "white." This conceptualization is so ingrained into U.S. social interactions that it is expected that Latina/os with lighter skin tones would be more likely to see themselves as American as the society around them might be more likely to identify them as such. Similarly, the

regression results support the hypothesis that Latino/as with darker skin tones are less likely to identifying with a strong American identity compared to those with very light skin tones.

The only hypothesis that was not supported by the regression results was the one indicating that greater levels of discrimination is associated with a weaker American identity. The results indicate that the level of discrimination is not related to the strength of an American identity. Background analysis showed that there were certain complications with the measurement of the discrimination variables. In particular, as noted above, the large majority—two-thirds reported that they have not experienced any of the four dimensions of discrimination used in the analysis. Given what we know from the literature, there may be a level of underreporting among respondents in the LNS.

The first explanation for the discrimination undercount is that previous research has shown that Latino/a generational groups report discrimination in different rates. In another study by Telles and Ortiz (2008) it was found that first-generation Mexicans tend to underreport discrimination versus second- and third-generation Mexicans. It is possible that first-generation Mexicans, as well as all first generation Latino/as, may underreport discrimination because they are less likely to identify some experiences as being discriminatory compared to those with a longer presence in the United States who are more likely to understand the racial dynamics and racial history in this country. Within this study using LNS data, the majority of the sample, (65 percent) are first generation. Because such a large percentage of the sample is foreign- born it is possible that they view certain experiences as not discriminatory. This is not to say that those

who are first generation experience less discrimination than Latina/os of later generations, but that they may not recognize a discriminatory situation as being such.

A second possible explanation for the undercount is that it is possible to not identify a situation as being discriminatory or racist as many of these actions and situation can be expressed overtly or covertly (Dovidio, Kawakami, and Gaertner 2002). As seen in the Dovidio et al. (2002) study, many times Latino/as face discrimination in an everyday setting, such as in a store, and experience subtle discrimination when compared to whites. Dovidio et al. (2002) found that Latino confederate shoppers were asked more frequently for identification by sales cashiers compared to white confederate shoppers even though Latino confederates were never overtly refused service or received blatantly racist remarks by salespeople (Dovidio et al. 2010). Therefore, it is possible that the first-generation and maybe even later generation Latino/as do not recognize these subtle differences and therefore do not report such instances as discriminatory or racist compared to blatant actions. And a final explanation may be that the way LNS measured discrimination was not an adequate measure. Indeed, there is the need for further research to develop better ways of measuring the nuances of discrimination.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how racial identification, experiences of discrimination, and skin tone effect the strength of an American identity. Previous research shows that discrimination and skin tone have an effect in predicting racial identification (Golash-Boza and William Darity 2008; Golash-Boza 2006). Additionally, previous historical studies have found that a white racial identity has been almost synonymous to being an "American" (Barlow, Taylor, and Lambert 2000; Lopez 2006; Monsivais 2004; Feagin 2000). Thus the main hypothesis of this study was that Latino/as who racially identified as "other race," were darker in skin tone, and had experiences of discrimination would have weaker odds in identifying with a strong American identity. In other words, Latino/as who have experienced racialization in the U.S. will "feel less America" because others do not perceive them as "white" and therefore not eligible for all the beneficial opportunities to education, labor, and housing that whites in the U.S. experience more than any other racial group in the history of the U.S.

The regression results in this study support the hypothesis that darker skin and racially identifying as "other race" (proxy for Latino/a), do decrease the odds of a Latino/a identifying strongly with an American identity. Additionally, the critical literature on the meaning and history of whites' relations with minorities, the legal and social U.S. definitions of citizenship, and the experiences of Latino/as as a racialized

minority in the U.S. all support the hypothesis as well. The literature that speaks to fear of U.S. mainstream that focuses on Latino/as as being perceived as a cultural threat to whites and therefore America (Chavez 2008; Santa Ana 2002) is also key to the support of this hypothesis.

Further Research and Limitations

Future research should look at further improving certain measuring instruments such as discrimination, and American and racial identity. For example more detail in understanding the "feeling of being American" in respondents and its effects on racial identity could be researched in qualitative studies to get a better grasp of what respondents mean when they do or not have a strong American identity. As research has shown before, claiming to be American for people of color is different than simply claiming the U.S. as a nationality or citizenship status (Barlow, Taylor, and Lambert 2000). Additionally, further research in qualitative studies looking at different types of discrimination and how respondents perceive that discrimination can also lead to better measuring instruments. Additionally, with better measuring instruments of discrimination and American identity one could conduct further studies into the relationships with racial identification. The measuring of discrimination was part of the limitations to this study in its relation to American identity.

Additional research could also look into how citizenship status affects the "feeling of being American" for Latino/as. Research has shown that being able to claim citizenship to a country is meaningless if certain citizens do not feel that they are being excluded from opportunities compared to other citizens (Flores 2003). Part of the

limitations of this study was that it was not able to use variables to look at citizenship status due to problems of multicolliniearity.

And finally, additional research using a sample that has a lot more U.S. born Latino/as from the second generation and further would also show the special relationship between American and racial identity. Research has shown that first generation Latino/as who have not been in the U.S. for a long time do not know or understand the racial history of the U.S. as later generations of Latino/as. Therefore, the first generation compared to later generations has different conceptions of what does or does not qualify as a discriminatory or racist act. This is important as two thirds of this study's samples reported being first generation, which may have lead to the complications with the discrimination variable in the second model in relation to American identity. Part of the limitations of this study as mentioned before was the underreporting of experiences of discrimination.

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